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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide accompanies a videocassette for teaching about the Victorian Era in the United States through the study of homes from that period. The teaching unit can be adopted for students in grades 4 through 12 and can also be used in college classes and in adult education. Skills are identified to help students interpret their physical environment through an approach that integrates principles of several subjects including history, sociology, science, mathematics, geography, economics, language arts, political science, art, and home economics. Five lesson plans to supplement the video are contained in the guide; these plans focus on various aspects of Victorian homes and architecture, specifically: American cultural heritage, architectural styles, community heritage, neighborhoods, and the impact of communication on fashion. Seven handouts, a bibliography, and the text of the narrative from the video also are included. (DB)

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Heritage Education

THE VICTORIAN ERA

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

by

Maurie Van Buren

ED337363

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I have gained quite an interest in architecture in the last couple of years since learning some of the basics. Now that I know something about it, I apply my knowledge practically everywhere I go. For instance, when I see an old structure I look at the characteristics of the building and determine what kind of house or structure it is and the date it was built. This is something I really enjoy and will probably use the rest of my life.

Amy McLean

Heard High School
Student

HERITAGE EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION:

Heritage education is the study of historical development with regard to economic, social and cultural factors. Historic homes are fantastic teaching tools for heritage education because they are the physical expression of lifestyles of the past. They express the age in which they were created, reflecting technology, communication, fashion, materials and climate. A home illustrates the wealth, character, tastes, dreams, and needs of the people it was built to shelter.

This video examines the Victorian Era of American history through study of homes. Students will learn to interpret the social history of Victorian buildings. They will understand the interrelation between technology, communication, economics and fashion. To interpret our cultural heritage, this video will take students from the slums of Harlem to the painted row houses of San Francisco, from southern textile mill villages to intown Victorian neighborhoods. It will examine the homes and lifestyles of the rich, poor and middle class.

This Victorian video can be used as a springboard for studying community heritage. It is supplemented with five lesson plans, handouts and a bibliography. Developed by Heritage Education specialist, Maurie Van Buren, this teaching unit can be adapted for grades 4-12. It can also be used in college classes and in adult education.

Heritage education videos are uniquely rich teaching tools which can integrate principals of several subjects including: history, sociology, science and mathematics, geography, economics, language arts, political science, art, and home economics.

This video is one of a series of Heritage Education videos designed to foster an understanding and appreciation of America's diverse cultural heritage. Additional videos in this series are listed below and on the following page.

Heritage Education Series:

Heritage Education: Exploration and Settlement Period
This video interprets the cultural heritage of the early settlement period of American history. Beginning with the removal of native American Indians, it illustrates lifestyles of the past by tracing the evolution of log homes. Students will learn how settlers created homes from available materials and how these homes adapted to the environment.

Heritage Education Series:

Heritage Education: Colonial Period
This video interprets the cultural heritage of the Colonial period of American history and illustrates the influence of European culture on American homes. It features Georgian style homes of Williamsburg and aspects of colonial community planning in Savannah, Georgia. Regional differences are illustrated through the study of New England and Southern homes.

Heritage Education: Classical Era
This video interprets the cultural heritage of the era prior to the Civil War. It contrasts the white columned plantations with slave cabins. Students will learn about the symbolism of Roman features on the early American homes. Students will learn to identify Greek Revival homes in terms of landscape, construction techniques, and social history.

Heritage Education: Victorian Era
To interpret our cultural heritage, this video will take students from the slums of Harlem to the painted row houses of San Francisco, from southern textile mill villages to intown Victorian neighborhoods. It will examine the homes and lifestyles of the rich, poor and middle class and the impact of the machine age.

Heritage Education: 20th Century Historical Revival Era
This video interprets the cultural heritage of the era from 1900 through the Depression. From the homes of the wealthy in Newport, Rhode Island to the cottages of the middle class, this was a time when homes were designed look historic and old, yet contained all the modern conveniences. Many of the homes found in American communities today are from this era. They illustrate a variety of historic eras including: Colonial, Spanish, Dutch, Neo-Classical, English Tudor.

Heritage Education: 20th Century Craftsman Movement
This video interprets an important movement in American Art called the Craftsman era. Homes of this era reflect a political and artistic philosophy which developed as a reaction against the machine age. The need for well-designed practical homes and furniture for the working class as well as the rich was recognized. This video examines Craftsman Bungalow homes in California and the Prairie style homes of architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Heritage Education: Suburbia and the Modern Planned Community
This video interprets the modern American lifestyle. It examines characteristics of suburbia and studies a successful approach to the ideal planned community called" Peachtree City" in Georgia.

OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of this Heritage Education Unit are to teach students:

About historical development with regard to economic, social, and cultural factors;

About chronology and the significance of major events and movements in American and world history;

About the interdependence of local history with state, national, and international history;

About chronology and the impact of technical advances;

About the interdependence of people and economic systems;

About the impact of communication and transportation;

About the role of class structure and ethnic groups;

About the relationship between past and present;

How people adapt to and modify their environment;

How the values of a society are reflected through the arts;

How society changes over time;

How home and family interact;

About the importance of community heritage.

THINKING SKILLS

This Architectural Heritage Education Unit has been designed to exercise and develop student skills in areas such as reasoning, gathering and processing information, problem-solving, interpreting and analyzing data, social participation, and creative application of knowledge. Bloom's Hierarchy of Thinking Skills has been used as a guide in the development of the questions and activities. The six levels of Bloom's Hierarchy of Thinking Skills are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation.

CURRICULUM

Aspects of Heritage Education are evident in many subjects.

History
Cause and effect
Conflict and consensus
Sequence
Change
Chronology
Community
Development of ideas and technology

Sociology
Rules, values, and convention of society
Issues of health and sanitation
Understanding cultural differences
Influence of media
Individuality and privacy
Problems of housing

Geography
Regions and boundaries
Resources and building materials
Climate and natural resources
Distribution and patterns
Settlement patterns
Cultural patterns and influences
Relationship betweeen natural and built environment

Political Science
Growth of social power
Planning and zoning
Effects of government on locality and individual
Historic preservation and law
Special interest groups

Economics
Mortgages
Real estate investments
Tourism
Creation and allocation of wealth and resources
Economic class structure

Language Arts and English
Impact of communication
Advertisements
Debating
Vocabulary
Researching
Speaking
Listening
Reporting
Writing

Science and Mathematics
Awareness of materials
Awareness of properties
Awareness of phenomena
Growth and change
Patterns and relationships
Measurement, Symmetry
Observing and recording
Identification
Classification
Testing hypotheses
Impact of technology
Relationship between form and function

Art
Aesthetic response
Design
Creative potential
Architectural styles
Visual sensitivities
Similarities and differences
Form and function

Home Economics
Home and family values
Home planning and construction
Home furnishing and decorating
Home maintenance

HISTORIC HOMES AS TEACHING TOOLS

Traditionally students learn to read and interpret books but are not taught how to read and interpret the everyday physical reality which surrounds them. Figuratively speaking, the built environment can be read in the same way as a book. In the three-dimensional book of architectural heritage, architectural terms are the "words," styles are the "chapters," lifestyle and social history are the "plot," landscape is the "setting," and construction techniques are the "grammar" of the book.

Social History

One of the easiest ways to enjoy architectural heritage is to study lifestyles of the past. Students should be encouraged to "read" the social history of a building. How was it heated? How much privacy did the inhabitants have? Architecture can be brought to life with amusing stories about a building's inhabitants. Homes can illustrate the dramatically different lifestyles of the wealthy and the poor. A historic building and its details tell a story about lifestyles of the past in a direct way.

Styles

Identifying architectural styles is an activity based on observing a wealth of information and selecting features which fit into a category. It is a way to classify the built environment into a pattern of sequence which has some meaning. An effective way to convey the concept of architectural styles is to illustrate their application on common buildings. Point out features characteristic of a particular style.

Local structures do not exist in a cultural vacuum; they are examples of regional interpretations of national and international styles. Architectural pattern books and later magazines were important vehicles for bringing new and uniform styles to all areas of the country. Sears, Roebuck and Company even offered pre-fabricated houses which could be ordered from a catalogue.

Buildings evolve and styles often develop as a reaction against a preceding style or as a look back in time to revive an earlier one. Historic buildings are not static; they change and evolve over time to reflect different styles popular during various eras of their existence. An illustration of a building which is an amalgam of stylistic features encourages students to determine which features do not belong.

Terms

Architecture, like any subject, has its own esoteric language. Students of architectural heritage should learn to identify features by a recognized term. A basic vocabulary must be understood in order to "read" the built environment. Recognition and identification are skills which must be developed in order to correctly interpret architecture. The capacity to name an architectural feature involves the ability to visually distinguish it.

The best way to teach architectural terms is by visual or graphic representation instead of verbal definition. Point out a feature on a slide, label it, and then describe its function or appearance. Once a term is introduced, it should be repeatedly identified in a variety of examples. Repetition is one way to ensure that a term is remembered; humor or an interesting description of an image are others.

A practical method for reinforcing the link between the visual and verbal identification of architectural features is to list terms to be covered in a lesson on the chalkboard.

Construction Techniques

To understand architectural heritage, students must have a knowledge of construction methods and building materials. This information links form with function. Studying the relationships between climate, natural resources, and building technology will encourage students to observe the familiar with new insight. Analysis of the function of an architectural feature encourages the student to speculate, to weigh evidence and ideas, and to hypothesize.

Construction methods often reflect local traditions of craftsmen and the availability of building materials. Technological advances and ease of transportation allowed the introduction of mass-produced materials. Students can compare the mass-produced materials with local handcrafted materials and the advantages of each in terms of cost, time, comfort, and aesthetics.

Landscape Features

The study of architecture is complemented by the study of landscape features. Buildings should be placed in their context whether they are located in rural areas, urban areas, or planned suburban neighborhoods. The setting of a house and its landscape features help students interpret man's relationship with nature.

BASIC CONCEPTS*

1. Change - Buildings, like people, continually evolve to reflect new surroundings, purposes, needs, tastes, and events.

2. Culture - People have distinctive customs, skills, ideas, arts, and values. Objects such as buildings are an expression of the culture, telling us something about the builders and owners.

3. Context - Buildings, architectural styles, and neighborhoods are the products of a unique interaction of time and place. A structure's surroundings, both natural and man-made, affect it.

4. Function - How a structure's interior and exterior space is used dictates the size and placement of rooms, hallways, climate controls, accessibility, etc. As a building's function changes, so does the building.

5. Form and Shape - The contours, outline, or pattern of a building is referred to as its "shape" or "form." Curved lines represent "soft" form as opposed to straight lines and right angles. Form affects the feeling a building evokes.

6. Scale and Proportion - The actual size and measurements of a building and the balance between elements of the same structure represent "scale" and "proportion." Altering the ratio of the height to the width affects the scale and proportion and can also reflect the builder's taste.

7. Material - "Material" refers to the substance used to construct a building, such as wood, brick, steel, concrete, marble, mud, or plastic. Factors influencing the choice of materials include availability, technology, cost, and taste.

8. Space - The area enclosed by a building is its "space." The size and dimensions of the space are sometimes determined by function. Differing types of space include formal, public, or intimate.

*Material for the "Basic Concepts" portion of the guide was drawn from Daniel C. Le Clerc, Architecture as a Primary Source for Social Studies, Series 2, no. 5, National Council for the Social Studies, 1978.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For Local Research:

Census Records, Deed Research, Courthouses, Diaries, Family Bibles, Genealogical Societies, Historical Societies, Letters, Old Photographs, Old Post Cards, Local and County Histories, Neighbors, Newspaper Files-especially anniversary issues, Tax Maps, Older People, City Directories, Telephone Directories, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, National Register Nomination Forms (located at the State Historic Preservation Office).

Books

John Blumenson, Identifying American Architecture-A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945. Nashville, Tenn: The American Association for State and Local History, 1977

Andrew J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 1850. New York: Dover, 1969.

Mary Mix Foley, The American House. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

Barbara J. Howe, et al., Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History. Nashville, Tenn: The American Association for State and Local History, 1987.

Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl, Houses By Mail. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986

LESSON PLANS

LESSON #1: VICTORIAN ERA

Objectives: To teach students about one era of American cultural heritage, the Victorian period.

Materials: Board, video, unlined paper

Procedures: List the following terms on the board: balloon frame construction, asymmetrical, shotgun, bargeboard, gingerbread trim, A.J. Downing. Tell students they will hear those terms while they view the video.

Show the video. (The narrative of the video in this guide)

Discuss the video and terms.

Questions: From the video and narrative

1. What was the time of Queen Victoria's reign?

2. What were the major influences on lifestyle during the Victorian era? How did the influences interact? How did each affect the way people lived?

3. Explain how developments in technology changed the way people live. How did technology change the look of homes?

4. Why were mill villages built? How did they affect the lives of their occupants?

5. What were some common features of Victorian homes?

6. Compare and contrast lifestyles of the rich, poor and middle class.

7. How did balloon framing change the shape of buildings?

8. How did magazines and books influence the Victorian middle class?

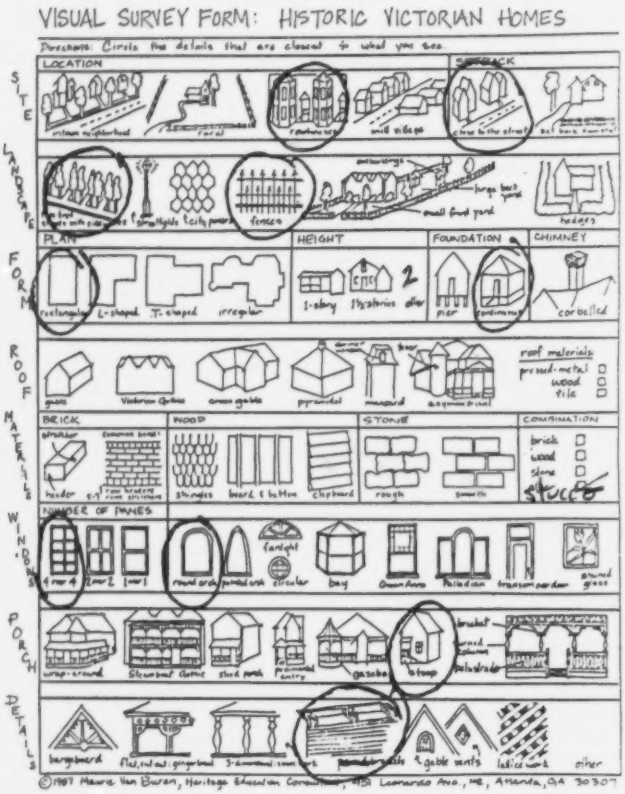
Follow-up Activity: Give students unlined paper and have them draw their favorite Victorian style house, drawing as many details as they can remember. Then have them identify the style and label all its features. Share and discuss the results, making corrections where needed.

LESSON #2: VICTORIAN VISUAL SURVEY FORM

Objectives: To teach students to observe and identify community features and to understand their significance, and to "read" Victorian buildings.

Procedures: Give students copies of the Victorian Visual Survey form which is in the Addendum. A filled-out sample is included in this lesson plan. Using sketches, slides, or photographs teach students how to use the form. Instruct students to circle the image on the form which is closest to that on the building they are studying. On the back of the form, students can sketch the building or a detail which is not included on the form.

Next, take a walking field trip in a Victorian neighborhood. At each building ask a pair of students to fill out their survey forms. Compare results. Ask the other students to add the missing details.



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LESSON #3: COMMUNITY HERITAGE

Objectives: To teach students why it is important to preserve community heritage and to learn the process of historic preservation.

Materials: Local histories, old post cards, old newspapers, old photographs, slides.

Procedures: Invite a local historian who is knowledgeable about and involved in historic preservation to come to class. Ask the historian to discuss the following:

*Explain why landmarks in the community are an important part of its heritage.

*Show old photos of landmarks which have been destroyed. Explain why they were destroyed, and what replaced them.

* List the reasons why buildings are destroyed. Neglect? Too expensive? On valuable land? Old-Fashioned and not useful? (ie.many outhouses were demolished when homes had indoor plumbing)

* Describe the National Register of Historic Places and identify local buildings on the Register.

* Discuss the benefits of historic preservation, such as economic revitalization, community pride, or tourist development

Follow-up Activity: A mock classroom debate where half the students support the preservation of a particular building and the other half do not.

LESSON #4: NEIGHBORHOODS

Objectives: To help students understand the concept of "Neighborhood" and to teach them to "read" social, economic, and ethnic history.

Materials: City map and/or country map; Sanborn Insurance Maps

Procedures: This lesson is a discussion. Use the questions as a guide but adapt as you need to.

Questions:

1. What constitutes a neighborhood? What are its boundaries? Rivers? Railroads? Highways? Streets? Parks? Commercial or Industrial Developments?

2. How are neighborhoods named? List the neighborhoods of your students on the blackboard and discuss the origins of the names. How are streets named?

3. How can you "read" the social, economic, and ethnic history of a neighborhood? (by the size of the houses, ornamentations, landscaping, and maintenance?)

Reinforcing Activity: Ask a well-established realtor or appraiser to come to class to discuss the importance of housing to the overall economy.

LESSON #5: THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON FASHION

Objective: To teach students about the various forces affecting popularity in housing, landscaping, and interior design.

Materials: Old magazines, current magazines, home sections from newspapers, and home design catalogues.

Procedure: Ask students to find and bring to class pictures of their favorite styles of buildings, landscaping, and interior design.

Questions:

* How does communication make the world look more the same?

* How does advertising affect taste in style and color? Look at a magazine and list the colors popular in homes today.

* How do architects and builders influence what is built and how it is built?

* How does television influence taste, especially in interior design and landscaping?

* How do home decorating magazines and home sections of newspapers influence home interiors?

* How do movies affect taste in homes? Name movies that feature Victorian homes.
* Why are home tours and open houses so popular? How to people share ideas in home decoration?

* How does a family building or buying a home decide which style house they prefer?

VIDEO NARRATIVE

HERITAGE EDUCATION: THE VICTORIAN ERA
VIDEO NARRATIVE

Imagine a time when dreams of gold swept adventurous spirits westward. When dreams of freedom and opportunity drew foreigners to a new land. And castles reminiscent of medieval Europe became a reality for the privileged. Imagine a time, not so long ago, called the Victorian Era.

When she was only 18 years old, Princess Victoria of England became Queen of the British Empire. Victoria's reign was long -from 1837 until her death in 1901- a period that became known as the "Victorian Era." The style of architecture that was popular during her reign has been termed "Victorian".

The Victorian Era was one of the most fanciful periods in architectural history. It was romantic surroundings in an industrial age, a decorative dream- world filled with images and artifacts of long ago in a time of rapid change.

What were those changes? And how did they influence the lifestyles and architectural tastes of Americans at that time? We'll find out the answers to these questions as we explore the enchanting homes of the Victorian Era.

This period in history was a time when the Industrial Revolution,or "machine Age," changed the way that people lived and the way they looked at their world.

In America, life for most people would never be quite the same. America was expanding west of the Mississippi River. Railroad networks criss-crossed the nation, transporting people, products and fashions quickly.

Before the Civil War, the South relied chiefly on agriculture to support its economy. After the Civil War, the Machine Age encouraged the South to begin shifting its economy gradually toward industry. The southern states continued to grow cotton, but now cotton mills were built there to process the cotton into cloth.

The northern states already had an industrial-based economy before the Civil War, but during the Industrial Revolution, their industry rapidly expanded.

The population of America doubled between 1860-1890. America was truly the "land of opportunity", and immigrants from Europe and other parts of the world flocked to her shores.

Most of these newcomers moved into towns and cities, because the factories there held promise of employment. The industrialists, who owned the factories, constructed low-cost housing for their workers. These homes were built close together, close to the road, and within walking distance from the factories. Rent was automatically deducted from the workers' paychecks. These "industrial villages" often had recreational facilities as well as company stores, also built by the factory owners, where workers could buy the goods they needed.

One common type of urban worker's house is the "Shotgun house". Built of wood, it is one room wide and several rooms deep. The gable or triangular end of the roof faced the road. It was called a Shotgun, because a person could stand at the front door and shoot straight through the house to the back.

In some communities, workers' houses were built of brick instead of wood. These homes were heated by coal burning fireplaces. In urban industrial areas of the north, workers lived in brick rowhouses, which were connected but had their own private entrances.

Many black Americans also moved from rural agricultural areas to cities to find a better way of life, their segregated, urban neighborhoods often became overcrowded with multi-family high-rise buildings, which often had unsanitary conditions and little privacy. Since these areas had very little green space, residents of neighborhoods like Harlem, in New York, turned to the streets for recreational activities.

Worker's houses may have been small and simple, but the homes of industrialists were large and ornamental. For the wealthy, this was truly a time when a man's home could be his castle. In fact, many Victorian homes were designed to look like medieval European castles.

These massive brick and stone houses, designed with towers and turrets, were like fortresses, protecting families against the evils of an industrial society.

The Second Empire style was very popular among the newly rich Victorians. It was named for the period of French history when Napoleon the Third reigned, and Paris became modernized.

A distinctive feature of the Second Empire style is the steep mansard roof with dormer windows and decorative roof crestings. The mansard roof may have developed as a clever way for Parisians to avoid paying extra taxes. Buildings were taxed according to the number of stories they had and although the steep mansard roof allowed for an additional floor of rooms, it did not count as an extra story for tax purpose.

While rich Victorians enjoyed the good life inside their turreted castles and imposing Second Empire mansions, life for America's growing middle class was also changing. Intown neighborhood sprang up rapidly as more and more people moved from rural areas to the city to find jobs.

By the late 1880's, the trolley, or streetcar, provided a fast way to transport workers. People began moving to the suburbs and commuted to the city for work.

Suburban Victorian neighborhoods typically had sidewalks and tree-lined streets. Houses sat close to the road and had small, well-defined front yards often surrounded by fences.

Many Victorian houses had lushly landscaped settings. Homeowners adorned their manicured garden with exotic plants from all over the world. They walked along shady curved paths leading to clumps of ornamental flowering shrubs or sat in the shade of gazebos. Lawnmowers made it possible to have grassy lawns. And many backyards had carriage houses and barns.

Homes were designed to reflect the tastes of the middle class and ornamented to reflect the particular imaginations of their owners.

The abundance of wood made it the most common building material in America. Victorian cottages displayed an ample amount of delicate, decorative gingerbread woodwork, made possible by new woodworking machines.

These new steam-powered devices created decorative woodwork in four hours that would have taken 110 hours if done by hand. Because it took less time to make these items by machine, the became less expensive and therefore more affordable to the rising middle class.

Porches and gables were favorite areas for decoration. The decorative ornament in the gable is called the bargeboard. Homeowners worked with local carpenters to create a variety of designs in the bargeboards. This one has the initials of the owner and the date of the house was constructed. Here we have two pairs of seagulls in flight. This bargeboard is designed to look like lace. A grapevine is cut-out of this bargeboard. Circles create a simple geometric design in this one. And the house with this bargeboard, which has two tiny hearts, was built as a honeymoon cottage.

The use of color was an easy way to express individual tastes. Technological advances allowed paint companies to offer ready-mixed paint in a wide variety of colors, which could be shipped quickly by train. Victorians favored deep, rich natural colors for the exteriors of their homes. Often the woodwork and trim was painted darker color than the body of the house.

During the Victorian Era, a new type of construction technique developed using machine-milled lumber. It was called "balloon-frame construction." Balloon-framing is a lightweight framework of two by fours held together with machine-made, wire-cut nails.

Balloon-frame construction had a dramatic impact on the way houses looked in the Victorian Era. Asymmetrical, irregular shapes replaced the square shape of houses. With small pieces of wood nailed together, it became possible to make bay projections, towers, and irregular-shaped rooms.

There were many different styles of homes popular with the middle class. Most of these architectural styles came from Europe, but Americans applied their own distinctive decorative marks.

The "Queen Anne" style is very easy to identify. Usually it is two stories tall with an asymmetrical roof, windows of every shape an size, and a porch that wraps around the house. Queen Anne homes also have a very decorative surface texture, like these fish-scale shingles, and a tower or gazebo.

The gazebo is the circular corner of the porch, which has a cone-shaped roof. Although gazebos are usually a landscape feature found in the back yards of homes, Victorians liked to attach them to their houses.

Popular books had a considerable impact on architectural style.

A.J. Downing was the author of several popular books depicting plans for cottages and villas. Downing thought homes should be picturesque, and that they should blend into the landscape.

This is an illustration from his book entitled The Architecture of Country Houses, published in 1850. Downing promoted the use of pointed gables in what is called the "Victorian Gothic" style.

A simple form of the Victorian Gothic style has one central gable and a decorative porch. Another popular form of the Victorian Gothic style has three pointed gables. Downing thought that the irregular outlines of these houses were highly picturesque and harmonious with nature.

Another book popular at the time was called Hints on Household Taste, written by an Englishman, Charles Eastlake. Although its subject was interior design, Eastlake's book influenced American Architecture. Americans took his designs for furniture an applied them to their houses, thus giving birth to the "Eastlake Style".

According to Eastlake, Americans misapplied his designs in the worst way. He stood against ornamental excess and was distressed when furniture designs such as table legs were used for porch columns.

Popular literature also influenced the design of homes. Mark Twain's stories, such as The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Life on the Mississippi, were widely read by Victorians. The "Steamboat Gothic" style of this house evokes images of Twains' Mississippi steamboat and the romance of life on the river. The main feature of this style is the porch, which has decorative railing both above and below.

Advancement in printing technology, as well as in transportation, also made it possible to purchase a mail-order house. Sears, Roebuck and Company sold mail-order houses during the Victorian Era. Remember the Shotgun house? Well, Sears advertised its Shotgun house as "ideal for industrial communities". It had three rooms and no bath, and sold for $210.

Before we go inside, let's take a look at one more exterior feature of this Victorian home- the windows. Windows provide a clue to the date a house was built. Before the Victorian Era, window sashes had many small panes of glass. Around 1880, new developments in glass technology allowed for single pieces of glass to be rolled into larger plates. Windows with one large pane of glass instead of several smaller panes admitted more light and air, and provided scenic views. These tall windows, called "one-over-one" windows, tell us that this is a Victorian house probably built around 1890 or later.

Many Victorian homes feature stained glass windows. Up to this time, stained glass could be found primarily in churches. The Victorians revived this medieval art form to introduce light and color into their homes, while maintaining privacy.

Inside a Victorian home your get an idea how middle-class Americans lived a century ago. They enjoyed privacy as no other generation had before. Each room, had its own purpose. There was a fancy parlor for entertaining guests. Another room served as a children's playroom.

Can you image what life was like before indoor plumbing and electricity? Well Victorians were the first to enjoy these luxuries, which we take for granted today.

Homes of the wealthy featured bathrooms with elaborate tile, ornamental fixtures and running hot and cold water. Eventually, indoor plumbing became available to the middle class as well.

Gaslights illuminated Victorian homes until the advent of electricity. In 1879, Thomas Edison fashioned an incandescent lamp, and thus began a lighting revolution.

But not everyone could take advantage of these wonderful innovations. Many poor people did not have indoor plumbing or electricity until the 1930's, and some rural areas were without these amenities until the 1950's.

Just as popular books had a tremendous impact on Victorian architecture, new printing technology and low postal rates also put ideas for interior decoration at the homeowners' fingertips. It was now possible to promote fashions and products through magazines such as "House Beautiful", which still influences interior decoration today.

Magazines instructed the middle class how to imitate the rich on a budget and promoted the concept of "interesting clutter". In an article entitled "Much in a Little Space", one magazine said: "Provided there is enough room to move about, there is hardly likely to be too much in a room". Victorians filled their houses with machine-made furniture, wallpaper, and dark, rich fabrics.

Around 1900, there was a reaction against the excessive ornamentation of the high Victorian Era. Americans viewed all the fancy woodwork as old-fashioned and out of style.

Many people came to associate the Second Empire style with haunted houses, and houses like this, in a sad state of disrepair, were often the settings for scary movies. Remember the Second Empire style house in the movie,"Psycho"? Or the spooky homes of the eccentric Munsters and the Addams Family on TV? Unfortunately, over the years many Victorian homes have been neglected and demolished.

In the 1970's, however, American once again became interested in Victorian design. Many deteriorated homes have been restored, and new homes are even being built in the Victorian Style.

The Victorian Era was truly a remarkable time in American history. It was a period that embraced change and progress and at the same time, romanticized the past. From the turreted castles of the very rich to the Shotgun houses of the poor; from the picturesque Victorian Gothic style to the Second Empire, the homes of the Victorian Era provide insight into one of the most creative and inventive periods in American history.

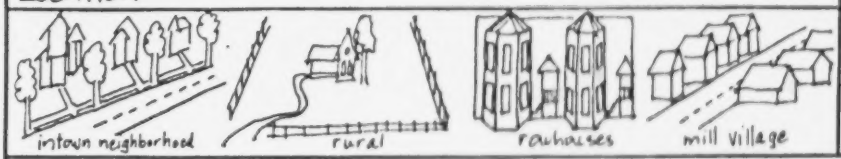
HANDOUTS

VISUAL SURVEY FORM: HISTORIC VICTORIAN HOMES

Directions: Circle the details that are closest to what you see.

SITE

LOCATION

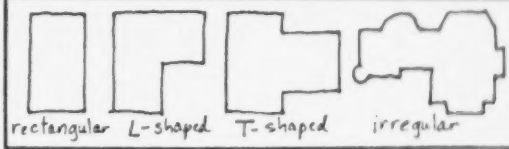


SETBACK

LANDSCAPE

FORM

PLAN

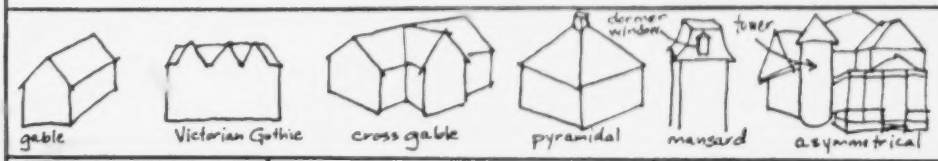


HEIGHT

FOUNDATION

CHIMNEY

ROOF

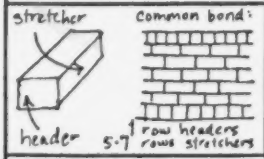


roof materials:

- pressed-metal ☐
- wood ☐
- tile ☐

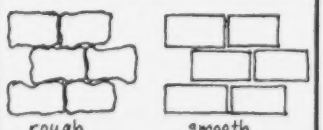
MATERIALS

BRICK



WOOD

STONE

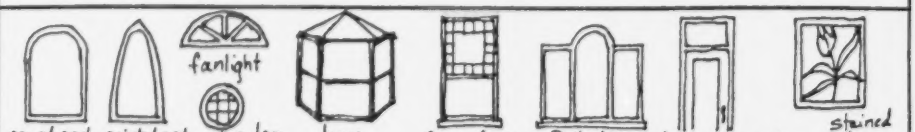


COMBINATION

- brick ☐
- wood ☐
- stone ☐
- other ☐

WINDOWS

NUMBER OF PANES



PORCH

DETAILS

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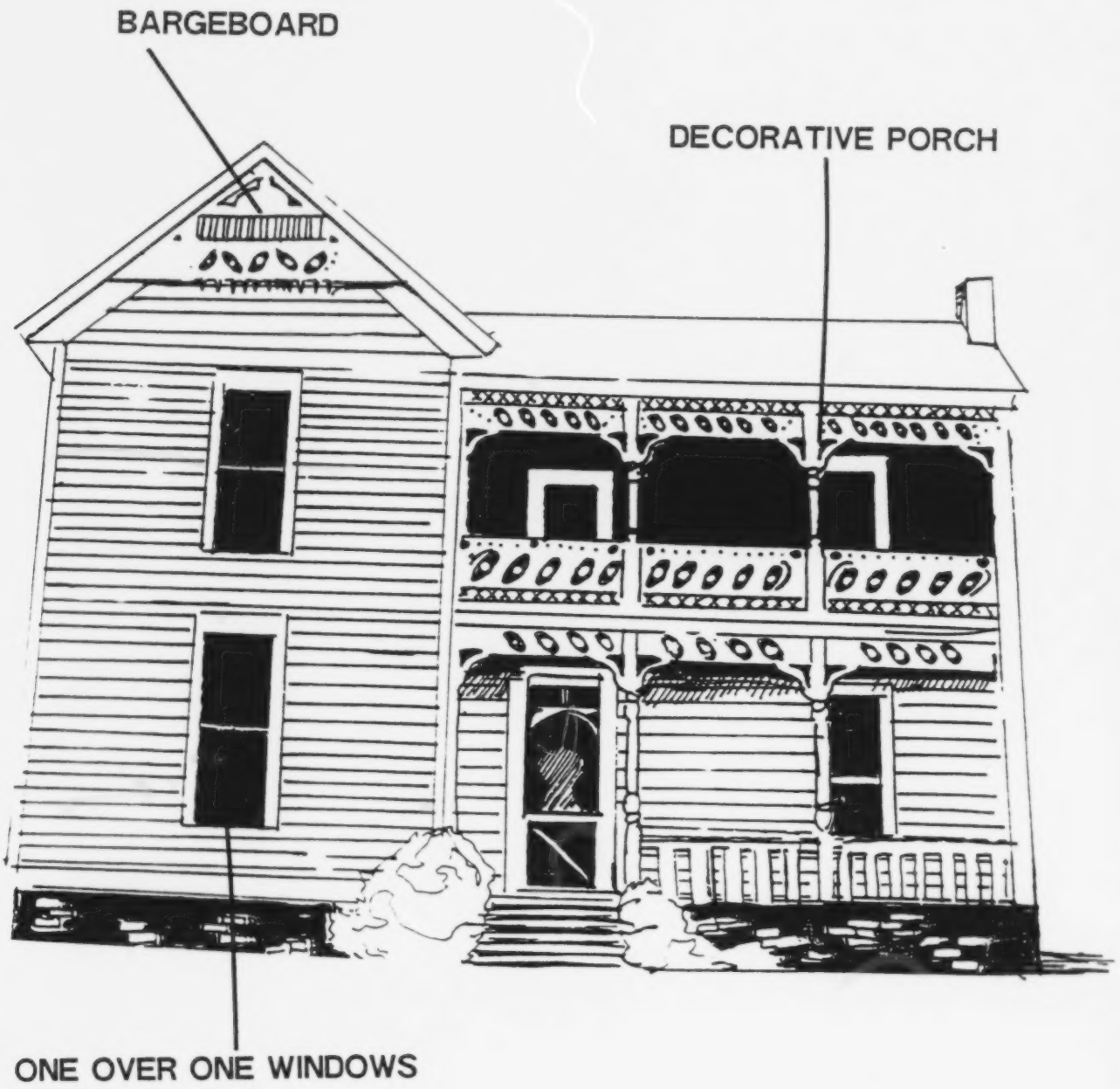
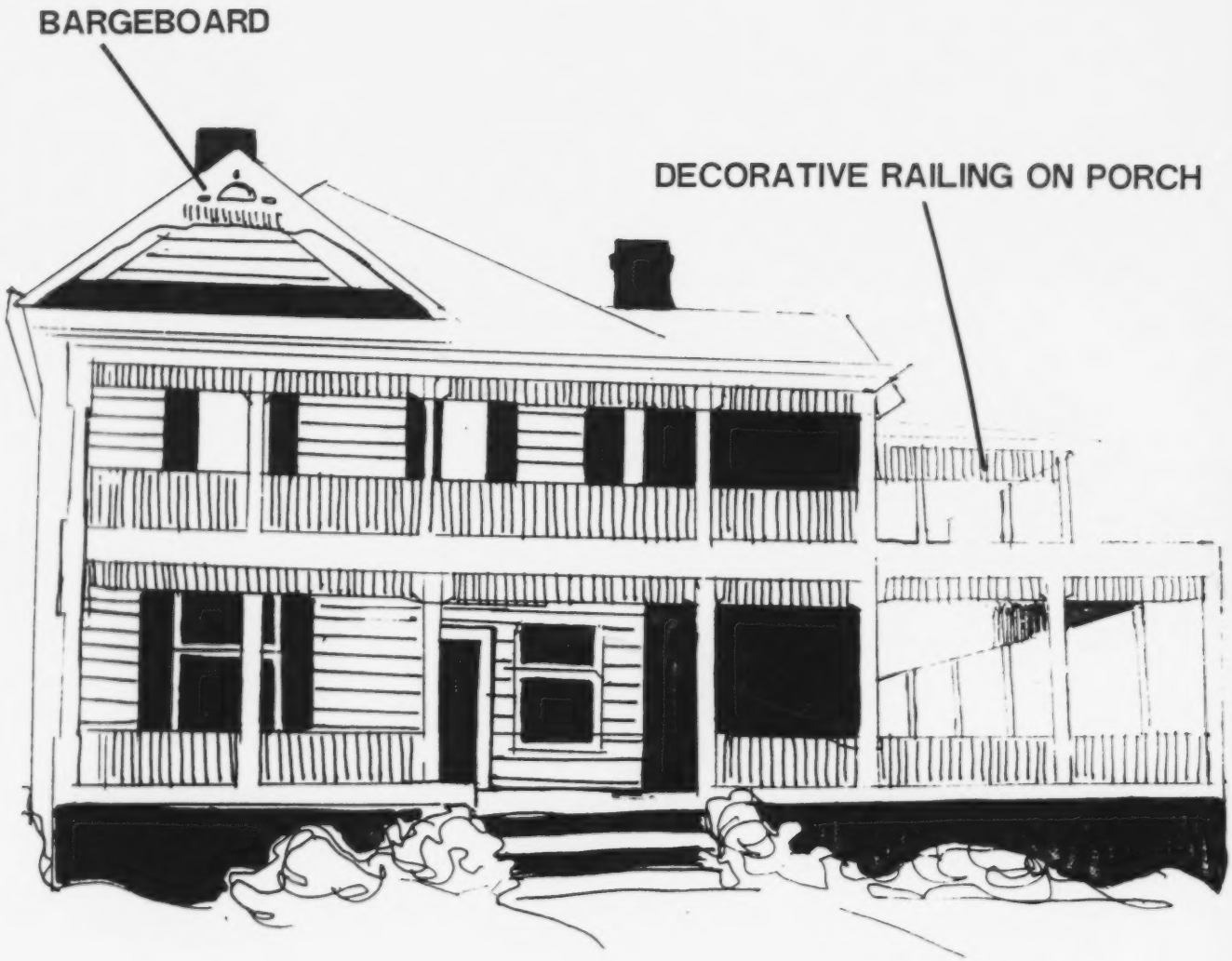
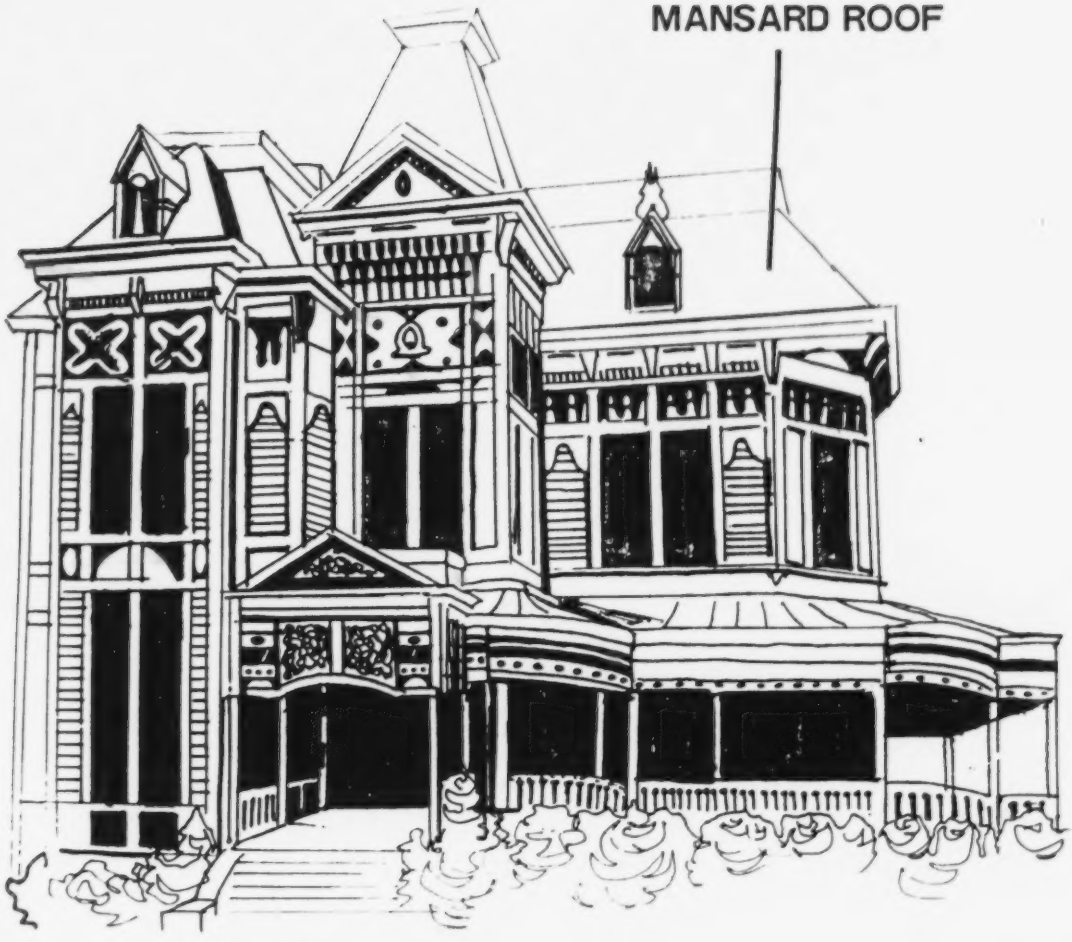
VICTORIAN HOME



STEAMBOAT GOTHIC STYLE



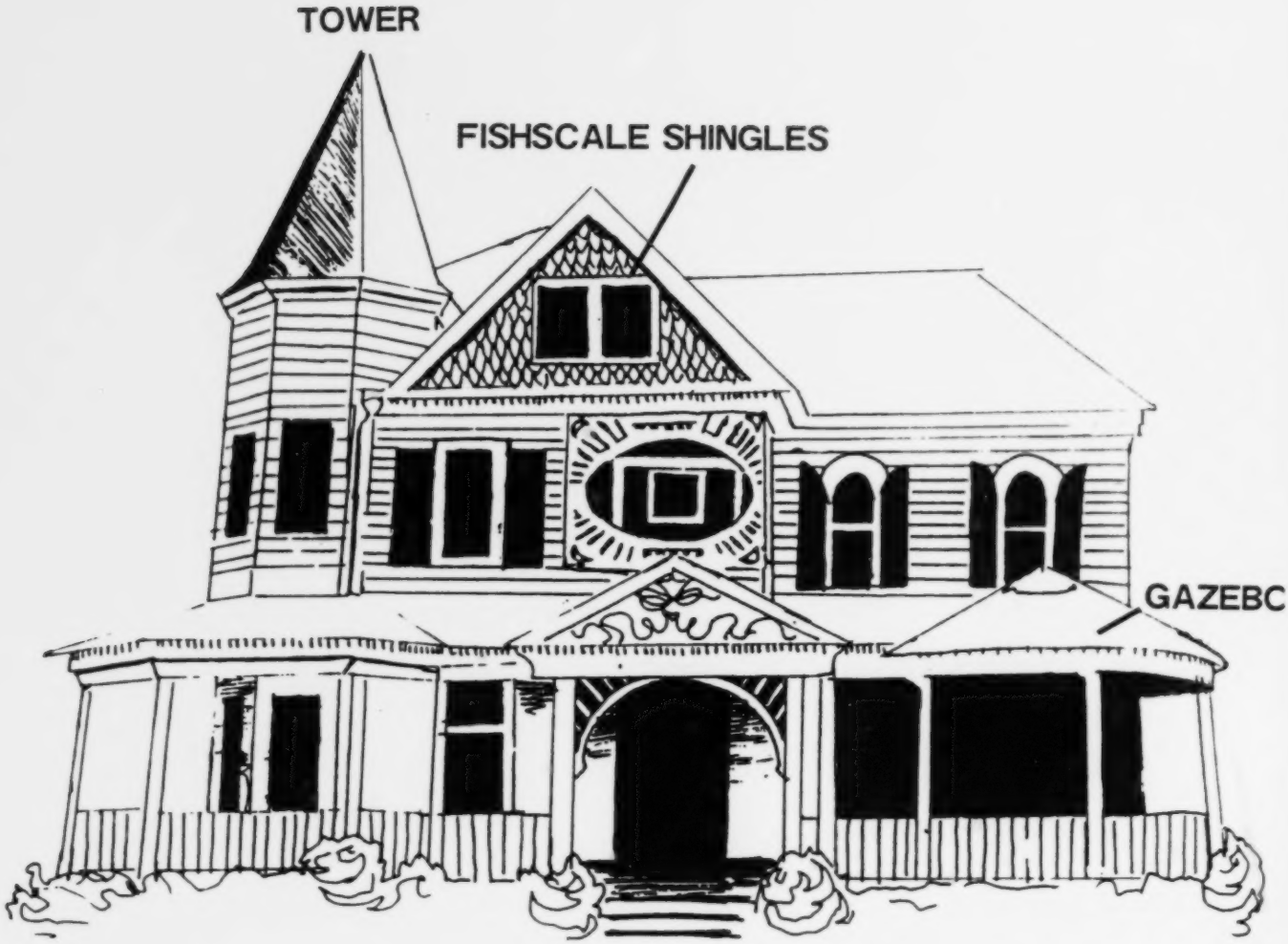
SECOND EMPIRE STYLE



SHOTGUN STYLE

ONE ROOM WIDE

QUEEN ANNE STYLE



VICTORIAN GOTHIC STYLE